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FINGER-PRINT EVIDENCE

New Laboratory to Aid Murder Trials.—A new laboratory which may play an important part in future murder trials, says the *International Police Service Magazine*, has recently been added to the already well-equipped Royal Institute of Public Health, Russel Square, W. C.

"Hitherto one of the chief difficulties of the medical witness called upon to determine the nature of suspicious-looking stains on the clothes of a person implicated in a murder charge has been, not to say whether the stains were blood or not, but to prove that, if blood, the blood was from a human being and not from an animal. One of the chief duties of the new serological laboratory of the institute will be to carry out a new test for determining the origin of bloodstains recently introduced by Prof. Uhlenhuff of Germany.

"The new test, it was explained at the institute, is, not meant to supplant the older tests by the microscope, spectroscopy, and by chemicals, but is a most important addition to them. It is carried out by means of rabbits which have been previously inoculated with successive small doses of human blood. After a time such a rabbit manufactures in his blood a substance which resembles somewhat the curative anti-toxic bodies a horse produces in its blood when inoculated with successive doses of diphtheria poison.

"The blood of such a rabbit when mixed with a solution of the suspected blood (such as might be made from dissolving out a bloodstain on a garment) gives a certain recognizable reaction if the blood is of human origin, but is unchanged if the blood is of any other animal. The single exception is the blood of the ape. The difficulty here could be overcome by using instead of rabbit serum the serum from an ape immunized against human blood.

"The means for making the test have been installed at the laboratory," it was explained, "so that a medical witness in any legal case can be able to obtain at once positive proof whether any disputed bloodstain is animal or human. The test is now officially required in Prussia in certain medico-legal inquiries, and it is expected by the council of this institute that the work of the new laboratories will fill a great want in this country." J. W. G.

Infallibility of Finger-Print Evidence.—A case was recently tried at the Highgate police court in London which brought out the infallibility of the finger-print test as a means of identifying criminals. A man who had previously been sentenced was accused of loitering with an intent to commit a felony and a Scotland Yard official attempted to prove his guilt by means of finger-print evidence. The accused, however, produced what appeared to be conclusive evidence that at the time of the offense alleged he was in the army, and he was accordingly discharged. Subsequently, however, it was ascertained that the army discharge which he had produced in evidence belonged to another man. Sir Alfred Reynolds, the magistrate before whom he was tried, said in explanation of the case: "Some comments have been made on this supposed failure of the finger-print method of identification and I am glad to correct the impression. The method is a good one and I do not know of a case in which it has failed. The police rightly attach great importance to it, and it is a pity that in this particular case some further information which was in the possession of the police at the time was not put before the court." J. W. G.

Conviction on Finger-Print Evidence in Norway.—The March number of the *Archives d' Anthropologie Criminelle* contains a report of a case of the